

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Last Reviewed/Updated: 15.10.2016

Next Review/Update: 15.10.2017

1. Policy principles:

This document sets out Regent Independent College's formal procedure for addressing complaints. It should be used only when informal attempts (covered here as well) to resolve problems have been unsuccessful.

The College considers any complaints or concerns very seriously and seeks to resolve issues as soon as possible, at the informal stage.

The College will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly and honestly. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

All records, which include copies of emails and evidence submitted which includes written records, will be securely held in strictest confidence by the Co-Principals while a student remains in the college and only then be confidentially disposed of, in line with the efficient storage of students' records once he/she has left the college. This will be with the exception where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

The policy aims to:

- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to use and understand
- Be impartial
- Be non-adversarial
- Allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation).
- Address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- Provide information to the college's management team so that services can be improved.

2. Stages of Complaints:

In a spirit of co-operation, the college will always try to resolve any issues on an informal basis as soon as possible before they get to the formal stage. Sometimes concerns can be easily cleared up by direct communication and the matter resolved amicably to everyone's satisfaction. Quite often, the case can be simply one of miscommunication.

3. Informal Stage:

Where a parent has a concern they should try to contact the member of staff directly to discuss the matter. Direct communication is the best way to resolve any issues. This can be done via telephone, in writing or email or in a planned meeting. Parents/carers should clearly state all relevant points giving factual details wherever possible, so if necessary, these can be checked. Any meeting arranged will take place at a convenient time and the college will work hard to ensure the meeting is cordial, calm and safe, with all parties showing respect towards each other.

The college is clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint and takes every concern seriously, seeking to fully resolve each one as soon as possible. Hopefully this informal process will quickly resolve the vast majority of any concerns. However should it not be resolved then the formal stage must be initiated.

A written record will be made of this concern with the outcome clearly recorded and dated.

4. Formal Stage:

4.1 Stage 1:

If a parent/carer feels that a concern has not been addressed through informal communications then the matter will be formally investigated by an appropriate senior leader. Parents must formally write to the college within 15 working days following the outcome of the informal resolution meeting and should complete the attached form at the bottom of this document (Appendix 1) and address it to the Co-Principals or Vice-Principal. If you would like help in completing this form, we will be happy to provide the assistance of someone unconnected with the complaint.

The member of staff carrying out the investigation will review the way in which the college has handled the complaint and ensure that the issues have been dealt with properly and fairly. The Co-Principals (or, in their absence, the Vice Principal, or Proprietor, if the complaint is about one or both of the Co-Principals) will write to you reporting the findings and recommendations of this investigation within *15 working days* of receiving the complaint.

If it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, then the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint, but you are not entitled to know which procedure or the final outcome.

A written record of outcome of this Stage will be made and securely held.

4.2 Stage 2:

If parents/carers are not satisfied with the result from Stage 1, they may choose to refer their complaint to Stage 2 of the procedure. This must be done in writing to the school within *15 working days* of receiving notification regarding the outcome of Stage 1.

At this stage, the Principal/Vice Principal (or Proprietor in the case of a complaint against one or both of the Co-Principals), will consider the complaint and the complainant will be informed in writing of the results of this review within 15 days.

A written record will be made regarding the outcome at Stage 2.

If the complainant is not satisfied after the Co-Principals/Vice Principal (or Proprietor in the case of a complaint against one or both of the Co-Principals) have completed their review, parents can request that Stage 3 of the procedure is enacted. This must be done in writing to the college within *15 working days* of the notification of the outcome regarding Stage 2.

4.3 Stage 3: Independent Appeals Panel:

An independent nominee will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the college, will carry out Stage 3.

In Stage 3, the panel will consist of at least 3 people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, with at least one person independent of both the college and the members of the Advisory Body. The meeting will take place within *28 working days* following receipt of a parents' note regarding their dis-satisfaction with the outcome of Stage 2.

In Stage 3, parents will have the opportunity to submit written evidence to support the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend an appeals panel meeting, accompanied by a friend, partner or member of a professional association. The-Co-Principals will be given the same opportunities.

Please note that any written records or evidence to support the complaint must only refer to the original complaint, with no new claim or evidence being admissible.

After hearing representations from both parties, plus any evidence, the panel will make a decision and write to or email the parent/complainant, communicating their decision with reasons and where relevant, the person complained about, making them available to the Co-Principals and Advisory Body within *5 working days* of the meeting.

The decision of the panel is final.

The Co-Principals will log all formal complaints received by the college and record how they were resolved.

If a parent or complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the independent appeals panel, parents may wish to make representations to the Secretary of State for Education.



5. Monitoring and Review:

The Regent Independent College Advisory Body members will monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Co-Principals will log all formal complaints received by the college and record how they were resolved. The senior management team of the college and the Advisory Body will examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

6. Availability:

A copy of this procedure will be made available to all parents on our website or on request a hard copy can be obtained from the College.

7. Findings & Recommendations

A copy of the findings and recommendations are provided to the complainant and where relevant, the person complained about. This will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and Co-Principals/Vice Principal.

Note

There were no formal complaints during academic year 2015/16.

Appendix 1

Parental concern or complaint form

Please complete and return to the Co-Principals/Vice Principal who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Name	
Pupil's name and form class	
Your relationship to the pupil	
Address	
Postcode	
E-mail	
Day time telephone number	
Evening telephone number	
Please give details of your concern or complaint below	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your concern / complaint e.g. who did you speak to and what was the response?	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Signed	
Date	
Below to be filled by school only	
Date acknowledgement sent	
By whom	
Complaint referred to	
Date	
Copy sent to chair of governors	
Date	

